

Professional Learning for Teachers/Teachers as Leaders

TEXT 1

Excerpted from "When Educators Learn, Students Learn: Eight Principles of Professional Learning" by Stephanie Hirsh and Joellen Killion, Phi Delta Kappan, http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v90/k0903hir.htm

Collective expertise exists when individuals in the system share their knowledge. When teachers apply that shared knowledge and experience, every student benefits from the expertise of every teacher and no student relies on just the knowledge and expertise of a single teacher. In this way, professional development, according to Wood, reaches beyond equipping teachers with techniques, but "widens their professional responsibility and hones their professional judgment. It is an agenda, much like that of other self-regulating professionals to foster commitment, autonomy, and efficacy" (2007, p. 709). As professionals, educators share expertise and systematically address problems of practice by developing shared knowledge, engaging in reflective practice, and assessing the impact of their work.

TEXT 2

Excerpted from *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development* by Joellen Killion, NSDC and Corwin Press, 2008.

Staff development that begins with the end in mind is the first step to ensuring that students will benefit from staff development. That end is more than transmitting information through workshops, but rather attends to the comprehensive approach to professional learning by developing knowledge and skills, addressing dispositions or attitudes, and focusing on integrating new practices into the workplace to produce results for students. (Killion, p. 21)

TEXT 3

Excerpted from *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, 2nd ed. by Lois Brown Easton, NSDC, 2008.

According to Lois Brown Easton, powerful professional development (or professional learning) "arises from and returns to the world of teaching and learning. It begins with what will really help young people learn, engages those involved in helping them learn, and has an effect on the classrooms. . . where those students and their teachers learn. (p.2) Easton differentiates powerful professional learning from the "sage on the stage" and workshop approaches and lists qualities that characterize it (pp. 3-4)

Powerful professional learning. . .

1. . . requires collecting, analyzing, and presenting real data from student work and teacher practice
2. . . results in application in the classroom
3. . . honors the professionalism, expertise, experiences, and skills of the staff
4. . . is collaborative or has collaborative aspects to it
5. . . establishes a culture of quality
6. . . results in automatic buy-in because it uses the talent within

“Roles change as educators shift from traditional staff development to professional learning. Accustomed to being passive receptors of information at in-services, classroom teachers may find that they need to facilitate learning; identify and solve problems; become data collectors, analyzers, and reporters; and act as coaches, mentors, and observers. They may take on new roles as facilitators of school-level professional learning. They may need to learn how to learn from each other, how to translate experience into knowledge, and when to find outside resources. They will use reflection and dialogue as tools for learning. They will open up their classrooms and share their work so that all may learn. (p. 18)

TEXT 4

Leadership for Student Learning: Redefining the Teacher as Leader

School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative

A Report of the Task Force on Teacher Leadership

April 2001

Institute for Educational Leadership

Retrieved from <http://www.ctl.vcu.edu/images/documents/RedefiningtheTeacherasLeader.pdf>

Writing in the *Phi Delta Kappan* of February 2001, Roland Barth, a strong supporter of teachers as movers and shakers in schools, notes that, although “something deep and powerful within school cultures . . . seems to work against teacher leadership,” there are at least ten areas, all of them having an impact on teacher-student relationships, where teacher involvement is actually essential to the health of a school.

Teacher leadership is not about “teacher power.” Rather, it is about mobilizing the still largely untapped attributes of teachers to strengthen student performance at ground level and working toward real collaboration, a locally tailored kind of shared leadership, in the daily life of the school. Teachers must be an essential part of that leadership, never more so than when issues of instructional leadership are at stake. Teacher leadership can be a big part of the answer to questions like the following:

- How can we create the “professional community” that research shows is essential to peak school and student performance?
- How can we create school environments where each student is known and treated as an individual?
- What can be done to increase the quality of teachers and enhance the professionalism of teaching and teachers?